

PROPOSED USE OF THE PLENARY POWERS TO VALIDATE
THE GENERIC NAME "HOPLITOPLACENTICERAS" (CLASS
CEPHALOPODA, ORDER AMMONOIDEA) (UPPER CRETACEOUS)
AS FROM PAULCKE, 1906, AND TO DETERMINE ITS TYPE
SPECIES

By C. W. WRIGHT

(London)

(Commission Reference : Z.N.(S.) 1197)

The purpose of the present application is to ask the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to give a direction as to the interpretation of the nominal species *Hoplites plasticus* Paulcke, 1906, the type species of the genus *Hoplitoplacenticeras* Paulcke, 1906, and, having done so, to place the name of that genus on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology*.

2. In 1906 W. Paulcke described and figured a series of ammonites from the Upper Cretaceous Campanian stage in Patagonia. Among them was a group of forms which he regarded as transitional between the genera *Hoplites* Neumayr, 1875, and *Placenticeras* Meek, 1876. He headed the section of his paper which dealt with this group (: 12—54) "*Hoplites-Placenticeras*" but later had a heading "*Hoplito-Placenticeras*". He explains (: 17) that these "transitional" forms can be described as "*Hoplitoplacenticeras*": those that show strong hoplitoid characteristics might, he suggested, be written with the "Hoplito-" portion in roman, and the "-placenticeras" portion in italic type, while the reverse method might be employed for those with placenticeratoid characteristics. Paulcke's ideas are so peculiar that I annex below a facsimile of the passage in question :—

Facsimile of the first complete paragraph on page 183 (= page 17 of separate)
of Paulcke's paper

Zwischenformen zwischen *Hoplites* und *Placenticeras* würden dementsprechend als *Hoplitoplacenticeras* bezeichnet. Wiegen Hoplitidenmerkmale vor, so wäre der Name *Hoplitoplacenticeras* zu schreiben, wiegen Placenticeratenmerkmale vor, so müsste *Hoplito-placenticeras* stehen. — Bei etwa Gleichwertigkeit der Merkmale würde kein Name hervorgehoben. — Als Beispiel eines echten *Placenticeras* wäre *Placenticeras placenta* MEEK anzuführen, während *Placenticeras pacificum* SMITH nach obigen Auseinandersetzungen als *Hoplitoplacenticeras* zu bezeichnen wäre. Unter dem vorliegenden Material würden die Formen des *plasticus-laevis* als *Hoplitoplacenticeras* bezeichnet werden können, wenn man es nicht vorzieht, sie einfach noch *Hoplites* zu nennen.

3. Despite these generic names Paulcke described all his new species and subspecies of the group simply as "*Hoplites*". He refers (: 20) to the "Gruppe des *Hoplites plasticus* Paulcke" and the following "Untergruppen":—

"*Hoplites plasticus-Hauthali*"
 plasticus-crassus"
 plasticus-costatus"
 plasticus-semicostatus"
 plasticus-laevis"

After preliminary discussion of each "Untergruppe" he describes each in the form normal for specific or subspecific descriptions, but describes no *H. plasticus plasticus*.

4. Cossman (1907 : 239) in a footnote to Sayn's review of Paulcke's paper pointed out that these proposals (paragraph 3 above) were completely contrary to the accepted rules of nomenclature.

5. However, the generic name *Hoplitoplacenticeras*, so spelt, has come into general use and is attributed to Paulcke. Spath used it in 1922 (: 111). Diener in his *Fossilium Catalogus* volume lists it and gives as type species "*Hoplites plasticus* Paulcke". Roman (1938 : 505) describes it and gives as type species "*Hoplites plasticus* Paulcke". Usher (1952 : 93) describes a new species and gives as type species of the genus "*Hoplites plasticus-hauthali* Paulcke". In 1953 Spath refers to the genus and sets out the peculiar history of the name, described in paragraphs 2 to 3 above. He mentions also the name *Dechenoceras*, listed by Kayser in 1924 as the generic name of the species *Ammonites coesfeldiensis* Schlueter, 1867, a species which Spath and other authors regard as congeneric with the *plasticus* group. All the forms figured and described by Paulcke were so described in a way appropriate to subspecies, that is, as trinominals, apart from the fact that he linked the subspecific to the specific name with a hyphen. Clearly, he regarded them all as subspecies of one species which would consequently be the type species of his genus by monotypy.

6. Kayser's work is a textbook. The name *Dechenoceras* appears twice (: 175, 176), in the combination "*Dechenoceras coesfeldiense* Schlüter", in lists of characteristic fossils. To the best of my knowledge the name has not appeared before or since, except in the reference by Spath, quoted in paragraph 5 above. It is possible that Kayser quoted it from the manuscript of a colleague in the expectation that the name would have been validated in print before the publication of his own book.

7. Despite the irregularity of its publication the name *Hoplitoplacenticeras* is in general use. Confusion would be caused if it were to be replaced by

Dechenoceras or some new name and no damage would be done to the name of any other animal if the name *Hoplitoplacenticeras* were to continue in use. It would be both logical and desirable that the name should continue to be attributed to Paulcke, in whose paper are to be found descriptions of a number of forms of the genus.

8. Paulcke described no nominate subspecies for his nominal species *Hoplites plasticus* and one of his subspecific names must therefore become synonymous with the nominate one. Usher's mention of *Hoplites plasticus-hauthali*, referred to above, may have been intended as a selection of *hauthali* as a synonym of *Hoplites plasticus plasticus* but, if it was so intended, his words cannot be accepted as a selection, if that term is rigidly construed. In 1953, however, Spath in the paper referred to in paragraph 5 above stated that "it is advisable to select a definite type species of *Hoplitoplacenticeras* from among the various *plasticus* forms of Paulcke and I propose to take as typical *H. plasticus* the species represented by Paulcke's pl. xiii, figs. 1, ia—d (1906, p. 204 = "*H. plasticus-semicostatus*") which is intermediate between the extremes, *H. hauthali* and *H. laevis*". I believe that the foregoing selection by Spath might be held to be valid, Spath clearly believing some or all of Paulcke's named forms as representing full species. In anticipation, however, of the possibility that the Commission might take the view that, rigidly construed, a formal lectotype selection for the nominal species *Hoplites plasticus* Paulcke is required, I hereby select as the lectotype of that species the specimen figured as *Hoplites plasticus-semicostatus* by Paulcke as figures 1, 1a and 1b on plate XIII(4) of his paper.

9. No family-group-name problem arises in the present case, the genus *Hoplitoplacenticeras* Paulcke being currently placed in the family PLACENTICERATIDAE Hyatt, 1900 (type genus: *Placenticeras* (emend. of *Placentoceras*) Meek, 1870).

10. I therefore invite the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature :—

- (1) to use its Plenary Powers to validate the generic name *Hoplitoplacenticeras* as from Paulcke, 1906, with the nominal species *Hoplites plasticus* Paulcke, 1906, as type species ;
- (2) to direct that the nominal species *Hoplites plasticus* Paulcke, 1906, be interpreted by the lectotype selection made in paragraph 8 above ;
- (3) to place the under-mentioned generic name on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* :—

Hoplitoplacenticeras Paulcke, 1906, as validated under the Plenary Powers in (1) above (gender : neuter) (type species, by designation

under the Plenary Powers in (1) above : *Hoplites plasticus* Paulcke, 1906, as interpreted in (2) above) ;

- (4) to place the under-mentioned specific name on the *Official List of Specific Names in Zoology* :—

plasticus Paulcke, 1906, as published in the combination *Hoplites plasticus* and interpreted as prescribed in (2) above (specific name of type species of *Hoplitoplacenticeras* Paulcke, 1906) ;

- (5) to place the under-mentioned specific name on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology* :—

semicostatus Paulcke, 1906, as published in the combination *Hoplites plasticus-semicostatus* (a junior objective synonym of the nominate subspecies of *Hoplites plasticus* Paulcke, 1906, through the lectotype selection approved in (2) above).

References

- Cossmann, M., 1907 : *Revue critique de Paléozoologie*, Paris
- Diener, C., 1925 : *Fossilium Catalogus* (1) 29, Ammonoidea neocretacea
- Kayser, E., 1924 : *Lehrbuch der Geologie* 4, 2, Stuttgart
- Paulcke, W., 1906 : " Die Cephalopoden der oberen Kreide Südpatagoniens ", *Bericht. Naturforsch. Ges. Freiburg* 15 : 167—244
- Roman, F., 1938 : *Les Ammonites jurassiques et crétacées. Essai de genera*, Paris
- Spath, L. F., 1922 : " On Cretaceous Ammonoidea from Angola ", *Trans. Roy. Soc. Edinburgh* 53 : 91—160
- , 1953 : " The Upper Cretaceous Cephalopod Fauna of Graham Land ", *Falkland Islands Dependencies Surv.*, Sci. Rep., : 3
- Usher, J. L., 1952 : " Ammonite Faunas of the Upper Cretaceous Rocks of Vancouver Island, British Columbia ", *Geol. Surv. Canada, Bull.* 21